

**TESTIMONY OF EDWARD P. HODGDON**  
**MARKETING MANAGER at FUNTOWN SPLASHTOWN USA, INC.**  
**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE, RESEARCH, AND**  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
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Good day Chairpersons Volk and Fecteau, and the members of the Labor, Commerce, Research, and Economic Development, my name is Ed Hodgdon, and I am the marketing manager for Funtown Splashtown USA, and will be going into my 20<sup>th</sup> summer season with the company that I started working for during my high school summer break between my sophomore and junior years.

I am here to testify in favor of bill #774, which would create a training wage for the youth workers of Maine.

Funtown Splashtown USA has, in years past, been against any minimum wage increase because of the sole fact that provisions of the Federal Fair Labor Standards act regarding a youth minimum or training wage were never included in the bills. The federal rule applies to any employee under the age of 20, and allows a business to pay different minimum wage for a specified period of time for training. This is a one-size fits all approach that would not be ideal for a seasonal business like ours.

At Funtown Splashtown USA, we are the first job for many youth in Southern Maine. It was my first job at 16 years old. The park employs hundreds of young people, some starting at 15 years old. With these entry-level positions we are not just teaching the basics of the job, we are also teaching valuable life-long skills and lessons that will serve them in their lives beyond working at the park.

When the Maine Legislature or Maine voters are weighing how they will vote on a minimum wage increase, one of the first images that appears in theirs and your minds is an adult trying to earn enough each pay period to cover the basics. As a company and myself personally, support the idea that adults need to earn a wage that will make sure they have a roof over their head, food to eat, the basics of living, and support a family. But when we are trying to help that section of the population, you are also including the teenager that is living with their parents, and not supporting themselves or others.

Small and seasonal business in particular have a limited ability to increase sales and few options to mitigate increased labor costs. Funtown Splashtown USA, who has a seasonal youth workforce will be looking for more efficiencies in their operations, which would decrease the number of positions available for first-time job seekers.

You have three different bills to consider, each with their own way of addressing this issue. I implore you to seriously consider these as job-retaining policies for not just Funtown Splashtown USA, but for businesses throughout the state that want to train the Maine youth to be outstanding workers like our state is already known for.